

What is claimed is:

1. A closed loop restocking system, comprising:
dispensing hardware located at a decentralized location, said hardware producing data representative of dispensed items;
a carousel located at a centralized location and responsive to said data;
a restocking package for carrying items selected from said carousel in response to said data, said restocking package carrying indicia.
2. The system of claim 1 additionally comprising a bar code scanner, and wherein said indicia includes a bar code, said bar code being scanned to verify that said dispensing hardware is restocked with said items selected from said carousel and carried in said restocking package.
3. The system of claim 2 additionally comprising a printer at said centralized location for printing said bar code.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein said indicia indicates a dispensing cabinet and a location under the control of the dispensing cabinet.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein said carousel is comprised of a drive track; a plurality of bins being driven by said drive track; a drive mechanism for driving said drive track; and a sensor for sensing the position of said rows of bins, said system comprising a computer responsive to said sensor and said data representative of a plurality of items to be picked for controlling said drive mechanism.
6. The system of claim 5 additionally comprising at said centralized location:
a printer responsive to said computer; and
a hand-held device for communicating to said computer when an item has been picked and for displaying data representative of another item to be picked.
7. The system of claim 1 wherein said carousel comprises first and second drive tracks; a plurality of bins arranged into first and second pluralities of rows, said first plurality of rows being driven by said first drive track, said second plurality of rows being driven by said second drive track; first and second drive mechanisms for driving said first and second drive tracks, respectively; and sensors for sensing the position of said first and second pluralities of rows of bins, said system comprising a computer responsive to said sensors and data representative of items to be picked

from said first plurality of rows and said second plurality of rows for controlling said first and second drive mechanism.

8. The system of claim 7 additionally comprising at said centralized location:
a printer responsive to said computer; and
a hand-held device for communicating to said computer when an item has been picked and for displaying data representative of another item to be picked.

9. A restocking method, comprising:
generating data with a dispensing device located at decentralized locations representative of dispensed items;
conveying said data to a centralized location;
generating a restocking package by picking at least certain of the items from a carousel in response to said data;
transporting said restocking package to said decentralized locations; and
restocking said dispensing device at said decentralized locations with said restocking package.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said restocking includes removing items from the restocking package and inserting the items into specific locations in said dispensing device.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said restocking includes inserting the restocking package into a specific location in said dispensing device.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said restocking package is an envelop, and wherein said inserting includes placing said envelop into a lock-lidded, patient specific location in said dispensing device.

13. The method of claim 12 additionally comprising scanning a bar code on said envelop, said scanned bar code used to identify a patient specific location for said envelop and for updating said dispensing device's records.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the restocking package is a tote containing a plurality of patient specific envelops, and wherein said inserting includes placing said tote into said dispensing device.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said tote contains a chip having information about the contents of said tote, said method additionally comprising

dispensing from said tote, and modifying the information in said chip in response to said dispensing.

16. The method of claim 15 additionally comprising returning said tote to said centralized location, and connecting said tote to said carousel, said carousel accessing said information in said chip.

17. The method of claim 9 wherein said restocking package includes a cart containing a plurality of patient specific envelopes, and wherein said restocking includes connecting said cart to said dispensing device.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said cart contains a chip having information about the contents of said cart, said method additionally comprising dispensing from said cart, and modifying the information in said chip in response to said dispensing.

19. The method of claim 18 additionally comprising returning said cart to said centralized location, and connecting said cart to said carousel, said carousel accessing said information in said chip.

20. The method of claim 9 wherein said generating data includes requesting an item whenever the quantity of said item falls below a par level.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said par value is a dynamic value based on one of current and historic usage.

22. The method of claim 21 additionally comprising:
generating records of dispensing events, inventory count, restock events, and configuration events, and
periodically archiving said records.